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Middle East Situation Report #36  
(as of 1100 EST, 14 February 1984)

LEBANON/SYRIA

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[redacted] all was quiet in Beirut, but that the attack on Army 4th Brigade positions in the Qabr Shamun area was continuing. [redacted] no one knew what the effect of the fighting would be on Beirut itself. Army commander General Tannous approached the US Ambassador to request evacuation of the 4th Brigade by US fleet landing craft if the situation deteriorates. The Ambassador reportedly replied that the fleet might undertake such an evacuation if it was not opposed. Tannous reported that Israeli gunboats off Ad Damur had turned back Lebanese patrol boats attempting to resupply the 4th Brigade. Tannous also reported the 4th Brigade communications were experiencing serious jamming and deception, probably by the Syrians. [redacted]

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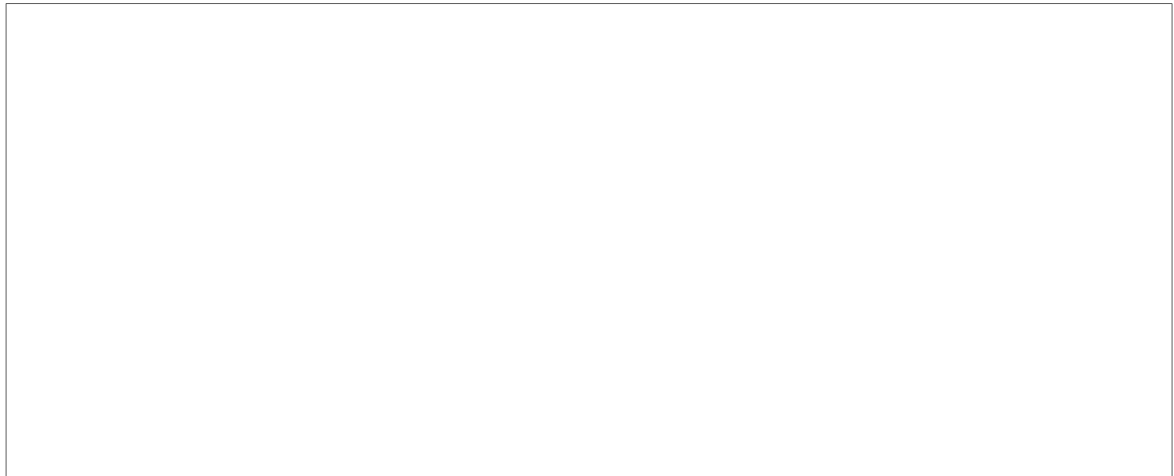
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According to a report from EUCOM, the 4th Brigade has given up its positions in the Qabr Shamun area and retreated to Ad Damur. An attempt to reinforce the 43rd Battalion was beaten back by combined Druze/Palestinian forces. [redacted]

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An attack on Lebanese Army positions on either side of the "gap" began late last night, apparently spearheaded by Palestinian elements. The attack probably represented Syrian pressure on Gemayel to take some decisive action.

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[REDACTED]

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Reports of intended shelling and a massive attack are probably part of efforts by Syrian-backed opposition to force Gemayel to deal with them. The retreat of the the 4th Brigade opens the entire southern Alayh ridge to the Druze and makes LAF positions along the coast untenable.

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[REDACTED]

25X1

[REDACTED]

Terrorism

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[REDACTED]

Embassy Damascus reports an apparent explosion at the Iranian Embassy in the Syrian capital today. It finds no external evidence of damage but US observers note enhanced security in the area, which includes a headquarters building used by Rifaat Assad.

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[REDACTED]

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IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Iran shelled Iraqi cities for the second straight day today, according to press reports. Iranian President Khamenei has threatened to hit cities in Iraq's interior and [REDACTED] the Iranian Air Force has received orders to launch mass attacks on Iraqi cities, possibly today.

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[REDACTED]

25X1

[REDACTED]

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25X1

[REDACTED]

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-- With only about 75 operational aircraft, Iran would not be able to inflict major damage on the Iraqis. Iran may be looking for more dramatic ways to attack Iraq, however, to avenge the death of Iranian civilians. Any Iranian air attack likely will cause the Iraqis to end their ceasefire. [REDACTED]

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PERSIAN GULF

Kuwaiti diplomats in Spain, Italy, France, and Greece have been given permission to leave their posts to avoid possible retaliation for the trial of terrorists implicated in the mid December bombings in Kuwait, according to State Department sources. In addition, Kuwait has cancelled its National Day celebrations, usually held on 25 February. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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